

Tips for Teens

The Truth About Inhalants

Slang: Glue, Kick, Bang, Sniff, Huff, Poppers, Whippets, Texas Shoe-Shine

Inhalants affect your brain.

Inhalants are substances or fumes from products such as glue or paint thinner that are sniffed or "huffed" to cause an immediate high. Because they affect your brain with much greater speed and force than many other substances, they can cause irreversible physical and mental damage before you know what's happened.

Inhalants affect your heart.

Inhalants starve the body of oxygen and force the heart to beat irregularly and more rapidly – that can be dangerous for your body.

Inhalants damage other parts of your body. People who use inhalants can lose their sense of smell, experience nausea and nosebleeds,

and develop liver, lung, and kidney problems. Chronic use can lead to muscle wasting and reduced muscle tone and strength.

Inhalants can cause sudden death.

Inhalants can kill you instantly.

Inhalant users can die by suffocation, choking on their vomit, or having a heart attack.



Remember: Inhalants can kill you the very first time you use them.

Stay informed. Inhalants include a large group of chemicals that are found in such household products as aerosol sprays, cleaning fluids, glue, paint, paint thinner, gasoline, propane, nail polish remover, correction fluid, and marker pens. None of these are safe to inhale--they all can kill you.

Be aware. Chemicals like amyl nitrate and isobutyl nitrate ("poppers"), and nitrous oxide ("whippets") are often sold at concerts and dance clubs. They can permanently damage your body and brain.

Know the risks. Chronic inhalant abusers may permanently lose the ability to perform everyday functions like walking, talking, and thinking.

Look around you. The vast majority of teens aren't using inhalants.

According to a 1998 study, only 1.1 percent of teens are regular inhalant users and 94 percent of teens have never even tried inhalants.



How can you tell if a friend is using inhalants? Sometimes it's tough to tell, but there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may be using inhalants:

- Slurred speech
- Drunk, dizzy, or dazed appearance
- Unusual breath odor
- Chemical smell on clothing
- Paint stains on body or face
- Red eyes
- Runny nose

What can you do to help someone who is using inhalants?

Be a real friend. Encourage your friend to seek professional help. For information and referrals, call the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs Resource Center at 800-879-2772.



The bottom line: If you know someone who uses inhalants, urge him or her to stop or get help. If you're using inhalants – stop! The longer you ignore the real facts, the more chances you take with your life.

It's never too late. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust.

Do it today!



Q. *Since inhalants are found in household products, aren't they safe?*

A. No. Even though household products like glue and air freshener have legal, useful purposes, when they are used as inhalants they are harmful and dangerous. These products are not intended to be inhaled.

Q. *Doesn't it take many "huffs" before you're in danger?*

A. No. One "huff" of an inhalant can kill you. Or the 10th. Or the 100th. Every huff is dangerous. Even if you have huffed before without experiencing a problem, there's no way of knowing how the next huff will affect you.

Q. *Can inhalants make me lose control?*

A. Yes. Inhalants affect your brain and can cause you to suddenly engage in violent, or even deadly, behavior. You could hurt yourself or the people you love.



To learn more about
inhalants or to obtain referrals to
programs in your community,
contact:

**Resource Center
State of California
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Drug Programs
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Sacramento, CA 95814**

(800) 879-2772 (California Only)

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